



CLAS Courier

OFFICE OF CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

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What is CLAS?

National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)

The National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care (the National CLAS Standards) are intended to advance health equity, improve quality, and help eliminate health care disparities by providing a blueprint for individuals and health and health care organizations to implement culturally and linguistically appropriate services. Adoption of these Standards will help advance better health and health care in the United States.

In 2010, DBHDS adopted the Standards as the framework for planning culturally and linguistically relevant services in Virginia's service system. Policies, guidance, programs, and training are organized to align with the 15 standards in effort to provide clear and comprehensive approach to planning in the Commonwealth.

Principal
Standard

Governance,
Leadership, and
Workforce

Communication
and Language
Assistance

Engagement,
Continuous
Improvement,
and
Accountability

[Read more about National CLAS Standards](#)



CONGRATULATIONS!

Eastern State Hospital continues to succeed in being the “first to care”—as the first DBHDS facility to host the Qualified Bilingual Staff training program.

Twelve staff members have completed the first step towards becoming Qualified Bilingual Staff. Their hard work and sacrifice will make a major difference in the support of quality care, supportive linguistic services, and language access for all of the individuals served at Eastern State Hospital!



Sharon Appia • Odulia Brown • Axia Dixon • Gloria Gacia • Myriam Graves • Mary Iskarous • Mary Lakowsky •
Peggy Morgan • Charles Oh • Miho Outhouse • Hasmukh Vyas • Tanya Wells

Henrico County Refugee Mental Health System

Eva P. Stitt, Refugee Mental Health Analyst

The Virginia Refugee Mental Health Initiative was launched in 2013 with the primary goal of establishing a self-sustaining system in different localities across the state so that refugees with mental health needs can access appropriate care. Led by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, this initiative has two components: The refugee mental health council that oversees the initiative and the refugee referral system—an organized group of providers where refugees with mental health issues can access care.

Henrico County is one of the localities where a refugee mental health initiative exists with core support from two refugee resettlement agencies - Church World Service and Commonwealth Catholic Charities, the Henrico Health Department, and the Henrico County Community Services Board. The referral system starts with a refugee mental health screening offered at the Henrico Health Department. Using a refugee-validated tool known as Refugee Health Screener 15 or RHS-15, the result is highly predictive for mental health risk. If screened positive, the client is referred to the Henrico County Community Services Board for further evaluation. Upon identification of specific mental health issue, the client can be treated at Henrico CSB if the care needed is within the services the agency offers. If not, the client will be referred to private providers. Screening, referral, or treatment is voluntary, and the client can opt to stop at any point.

The heart of this initiative is the medical liaisons of the Department of Health, Office of Newcomer Services who are assigned at the different resettlement agencies. Their greatest challenge is to find providers (doctors, counselors, therapists, psychologists, etc.) who are willing to take refugee clients who do not speak or have limited English communication skill, many have Medicaid for 8 months only and sometimes not available at the time of the call, are not familiar with Western bio-medical approach, and have no personal transportation but rely only on public bus services. Unfortunately,

there are not many providers who are willing to take care of refugee clients. An established referral system can address many of the barriers to accessing care with the involvement of private providers, non-profit organizations, public and private agencies, and interested individuals.

"The mental health referral system helped me in my work as medical liaison. Having a list of behavioral health providers who we have established contact through the mental health council makes the referral process faster and the client receives access to care."

- Laxman Chamlagai

CLAS Resources

Inclusive language is communication that eliminates stereotypes or judgment on the basis of one's gender, gender expression, race, ethnicity, economic background, ability/disability status, religion, sexual orientation, etc.

[Learn more about Inclusive Language HERE](#)

National Association for School Psychology is a resource center for handouts and materials in various languages to help students and parents gain guidance through difficult circumstances and coping

[Find out more about NASP Resources HERE](#)



For more information, please contact us:

Office of Cultural and Linguistic Competence
oclc@dbhds.virginia.gov

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